



***State of Tennessee  
Department of Education***

***English as a Second  
Language (ESL)  
Curriculum***



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## **Preface**

Tennessee Rules and Regulations require that students whose first language is other than English and who are limited in their English language proficiency be provided with a specially designed alternative language program. [Rule 0520-1-3-.056. a. 1 and 2 ii.] In Tennessee, this specially designed language program is English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL programs must be delivered by an endorsed ESL teacher using the ESL curriculum. The ESL curriculum contains grade level English language proficiency standards that specify what English Language Learners (ELL) should know and be able to do in English. It also addresses the language support necessary to enable the ELL to access the grade level math curriculum. These standards provide a bridge for ELL students to the academic content curriculum.

In addition, among the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) for services to English Language Learners is the specific mandate to establish English language proficiency standards. The specific subsection containing this requirement is provided below:

“Section 3113: State and Specially Qualified Agency Plans. (a) Plan Required.—Each State educational agency and specially qualified agency desiring a grant under this subpart shall submit a plan to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(b) Contents.—Each plan submitted under subsection (a) shall- (1) describe the process that the agency will use in making sub-grants to eligible entities under section 3114(d)(1); (2) describe how the agency will establish standards and objectives for raising the level of English proficiency that are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and that are aligned with achievement of the challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)”

The state assembled a diverse committee of practitioners from across the state representing large and small, urban and rural school districts. These practitioners drafted the ESL curriculum by determining the specific English language proficiency standards expected of ELLs at every grade level. These standards are referred to as English Language Development (ELD) standards.

The resulting draft was disseminated by conventional and electronic means for public review. Revisions were made based on this input. The state will administer a specially developed English language proficiency test which is aligned to these ELD standards in Spring 2005.

## **Acknowledgements**

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- Faculty from the institutions of higher education who advised the staff and assisted in the revision of the curriculum.
- The State Board of Education for guidance in the development of the documents.

Special appreciation goes to the following list of ESL Standards Committee participants who gave several weeks of their valuable time over the summer of 2004 to develop the initial draft document. Their commitment to the success of our ELL students is to be commended.

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## **Organization of the ESL Curriculum**

The standards are based on four modalities of English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and the language of mathematics. Each section is listed by grade level and the numbering relates to the standard, modality, and content. The first number is the grade level, followed by the modality, and then the content standard in order. For example, K.L.1 is **K**indergarten: **L**istening: Standard **1**. Each grade level curriculum is structured in this consistent format.

### **Reading/ Language Arts**

The modalities contain the following strands:

➤ **Listening**

- ◆ Vocabulary
- ◆ Comprehension

➤ **Speaking**

- ◆ Pronunciation
- ◆ Vocabulary
- ◆ Grammar/Structure
- ◆ Discourse

➤ **Reading**

- ◆ Print Concepts
- ◆ Phonemic Awareness, Decoding, and Word Recognition
- ◆ Vocabulary
- ◆ Comprehension

➤ **Writing**

- ◆ Writing from Dictation
- ◆ Grammar
- ◆ Spelling
- ◆ Punctuation and Capitalization
- ◆ Editing
- ◆ Sentences and Paragraphs

## English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum

The individual grade levels represented are Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, a seventh-eighth grade combination, and a ninth-twelfth grade high school cluster.

The high school cluster differs from the Kindergarten through eighth grade curricula in that it is based on proficiency and course design, rather than grade level specifically. In high school, an English Language Learner (ELL) is assigned to a course based on proficiency in English, not on grade level designation.

An older student entering with very limited proficiency in English would need ESL I coursework. For this reason, the Beginner designation correlates with an ESL I course curriculum, and the High Beginner with ESL II. Intermediate and High Intermediate correspond to ESL elective coursework, for more advanced support in English. It is recommended that the English Language Learner achieve intermediate level proficiency before taking a regular high school English course.

The Advanced level is based on standards necessary for success without ESL support. When an ELL reaches the Advanced level in the ESL Curriculum, grade level achievement is possible either independently or with limited support.

The aim of ESL services is for all ELLs to become proficient in English and achieve to high state standards. Higher education will be attainable for ELLs who have exited from ESL services.

## **Mathematics**

The language of **mathematics** is also addressed in the ESL Curriculum. Math content concepts are not required to be taught by ESL teachers, but language supporting the math content is included in the ESL curriculum. For this reason, the math curriculum is identical across grade levels. ESL teachers are expected to assist ELLs based on the demands of their grade level placement. The standard for mathematics in the ESL framework is:

**The students will enhance their specialized vocabulary by using the terminology of mathematics in English.**

➤ **Numbers and Operations**

- ◆ Function Words ( add, subtract, multiply, and divide)
- ◆ Numbers (i.e. cardinal, ordinal, and counting).

➤ **Algebra**

- ◆ Patterns
- ◆ Sorting

➤ **Geometry**

- ◆ Shapes
- ◆ Positions & Directions

➤ **Measurement**

- ◆ Time
- ◆ Calendar
- ◆ Money
- ◆ Height & Weight
- ◆ Temperature
- ◆ Metric

➤ **Data Analysis**

- ◆ Graphs
- ◆ Charts
- ◆ Parts of a Table

## Proficiency Levels

English language proficiency is a developmental process. For the basis of determining curriculum for ELLs, the following descriptors for the ability of each designation are provided:

**Beginner:** Students at beginner proficiency have virtually no functional ability in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. They are often new arrivals. Beginner level students may go through a “silent period” as a stage of normal second language acquisition development. These are initial literacy skills.

**High Beginner:** Students at high beginner proficiency are beginning to understand language and use it in a limited capacity. Typically, they memorize words and phrases and can comprehend and utilize language that they have been taught. The curriculum focuses on applying literacy skills to the development of new knowledge. In second language acquisition, social language usually precedes academic language development.

**Intermediate:** Students at intermediate proficiency are able to understand most oral language pertaining to familiar topics but have difficulty comprehending and using academic vocabulary. Their speech and writing are basic and contain frequent errors. Social language ability can be misinterpreted for more advanced ability in academic English. Grade level academic content skills are still in development. The curricular focus is on advancing applications of literacy skills for the development of new knowledge.

**High Intermediate:** Students at high intermediate proficiency are able to function well in most everyday situations but still require academic language support. They may have difficulty understanding text beyond the literal level. They often make errors in structure and idiomatic language. The curricular focus is on more advanced applications of literacy skills.

**Advanced:** Students at the advanced level of proficiency can handle most personal, social and academic language. Idioms and structure are frequently still problematic. Complicated literary and academic texts may require use of a dictionary when the language and context are unfamiliar. The ESL curricular focus is based on literacy skills necessary for success in a grade level classroom.

**Please note:** Language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing develops at different rates. Therefore, there are frequently different levels of proficiency across the different skills.

## Goals



There are three goals for the Tennessee English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum. The three goals of the ESL Curriculum are related to the four language skills and define the major program outcomes. They apply to all limited English proficient students K-12. They are:

**Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings.**

Students will use English to participate in social interactions. Students will interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment. Students will use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence.

**Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas.**

Students will use English to interact in the classroom. Students will use English to obtain, process, construct, and communicate subject matter information in spoken and written form. Students will use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge.

**Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways in multicultural and diverse settings.**

Students will choose language variety and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting. Students will vary non-verbal communication according to audience, purpose, and setting. Students will use appropriate learning strategies to extend their communicative competence.

Under these goals, there are a series of objectives at each grade or grade cluster for each of the 5 levels of proficiency. These objectives are observable and measurable learning targets which contribute to the attainment of the broader goal. They reflect the academic language required at each grade and coincide with the cognitive level of the student. The objectives at the Advanced level reflect what students are expected to know and be able to do in English language arts at each specific grade and are linked directly to the English/ Language Arts Curriculum Standards.